

Nouns: gender

Nouns are the names of things, whether objects, people, or places. Nouns in Arabic, both human and non-human, are either masculine or feminine. Usually, if a (singular) noun ends in a ta marbuuTa (ة, pronounced -a), it is feminine, and if it doesn't end in a ta marbuuTa, it's masculine.

بيت (beit)	←	masculine noun
house		
شقة (ša"ʿa)	←	feminine noun
apartment		

However, there are exceptions. All of these words are feminine, even though they don't end in a ta marbuuTa:

نار (naar)	fire
سما (sama)	sky
أرض (arD)	land/earth
شمس (šams)	sun
ريح (riiH)	wind
عين (3ein)	eye
يد (iid)	hand
روح (ruuH)	soul
حرب (Harb)	war

Nouns that can refer to both men and women (like job titles) can be made feminine with the addition of the suffix ة (-a).

	Masculine	Feminine
teacher	مدرس (mudarris)	مدرسة (mudarrisa)
engineer	مهندس (mohandis)	مهندسة (mohandisa)
actor	ممثل (mumassil)	ممثلة (mumassila)
artist	فنان (fannaan)	فنانة (fannaana)

Nouns: number

Dual nouns

In Arabic, if you're talking about two things, you need to use the dual form of the noun. Just add the suffix ين (-ein) to the masculine singular form of the noun.

	Singular	Dual
book	كتاب (kitaab)	كتابين (kitaabein)
window	شباك (šibbaak)	شباكين (šibbaakein)

Note: If the singular form ends in a taa marbuuTa (ة, -a), you need to "untie it" — change it to a ت —

before adding the **ين** suffix. Take the word **جملة** ("sentence") as an example:

جملة (gomla)
جملت (ت): جملت (replace it with a ت)
Add the **ين** suffix: جملتين (gomlatein) - "two sentences"

Note: While you can use the **ين** suffix to talk about two people, usually it's better to say "**اثنين** (itnein) + [plural noun]":

	Singular	Dual
teacher	مدرس (mudarris)	اثنين مدرسين (itnein mudarrisiin)
engineer	مهندس (mohandis)	اثنين مهندسين (itnein mohandisiin)

If you want to talk about a pair of things, like socks or shoes, you should use the singular form of the noun, and it'll be understood that you're talking about a pair. If you want to talk about one item out of a pair, say **فردة من** (farda min), literally "an individual from."

لازم اشترى جزمة جديدة (laazim ašteri gazma gdiida)
I need to buy a new pair of shoes. - Note that although "gazma" technically means "shoe," it's understood that you mean a pair of shoes.

أنا مش لاقية فردة من شرابي (ana miš la'ya farda min šaraabi)

I can't find one of my socks. - Again, note that "šaraabi" technically means just "my sock," but it's understood to mean a pair.

Broken plurals

Most Arabic nouns have broken (irregular) plurals. A few examples:

	Singular	Plural
book	كتاب (kitaab)	كتب (kutub)
child/boy	ولد (walad)	أولاد (awlaad)
sentence	جملة (gomla)	جمل (gomal)

With these nouns, you simply have to memorize their plural forms until you internalize the broken plural patterns. Eventually, once you've memorized enough broken plurals, you'll start being able to predict the plural forms of new nouns.

Regular masculine plural

There are some nouns that have regular (sound) plurals. Almost all masculine nouns that have regular plurals fall under the category of job titles etc. that can refer to either men or a mixed group of men and women. To make one of these nouns plural, you simply add the suffix **ين (-iin)**.

	Singular	Plural
teacher	مدرس (mudarris)	مدرسين (mudarrisiin)
engineer	مهندس (mohandis)	مهندسين (mohandisiin)
actor	ممثل (mumassil)	ممثلين (mumassiliin)
artist	فنان (fannaan)	فنانين (fannaaniin)

Note: In Arabic, plural human nouns that take the masculine form can refer to either a group of all men, or a group of men and women. So a group of **مهندسين** could be a bunch of male engineers, or a mixed group of male and female engineers.

Regular feminine plurals

To make a feminine noun (that doesn't have a broken plural form) plural, you drop the taa

marbuuTa and add the suffix لات (-aat). Many foreign loanwords, even some that are masculine, take this plural form (see جاكيتة and كومبيوتر).

	Singular	Plural
car	عربية (3arabiyya)	عربيات (3arabiyyaat)
word	كلمة (kelma)	كلمات (kalimaat)
clinic	عيادة (3iyaada)	عيادات (3iyaadaat)
jacket	جاكيتة (žakitta)	جاكيتات (žakittaat)
computer	كومبيوتر (kombiyuuter)	كومبيوترات (kombiyuuteraat)

Note: If you want to talk about a group of all women, you take the masculine singular form of the noun and, again, add the لات suffix.

	Singular	Feminine plural
teacher	مدرس (mudarris)	مدرسات (mudarrisaat)
engineer	مهندس (mohandis)	مهندسات (mohandisaat)
actor	ممثل (mumassil)	ممثلات (mumassilaat)
artist	فنان (fannaan)	فنانات (fannaanaat)